

VZCZCXRO1332
OO RUEHDT RUEHPB
DE RUEHBK #3497 3330828
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 280828Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5219
INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 003497

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/28/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEAN](#) [ARF](#) [RP](#) [TH](#)
SUBJECT: THAILAND CONSIDERING LEGAL ISSUES INVOLVED IN ARF
VDR PARTICIPATION

REF: STATE 122937

Classified By: Deputy Chief James F. Entwistle, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Per reftel instructions, POLOFF discussed possible Thai participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief Voluntary Demonstration of Response (VDR) with Suriya Chindawongse, Counsellor in the Department of ASEAN Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and JUSMAGTHAI discussed with Special Captain Sanyalak Rungsampan, Assistant Exercise Director at the Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters (RTARF).

¶2. (C) Suriya told us that the RTG was still considering participation in the VDR but the legal status of potential participants was a significant hurdle. Suriya recognized that there was no option to explore a status of forces agreement with the Philippines. As such, the RTG understood the Philippine government position was that Thai attendees would be required to attend the VDR on a visa. Participation in this manner would expose Thai participants to legal liability if some sort of damage occurred during the course of the VDR, Suriya said. While the issue was still under consideration, Thai participation could be limited to observer status, Suriya said.

¶3. (C) RTARF Sanyalak told JUSMAGTHAI that the Thai Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DPMO) was the responsible Thai agency for the VDR and that RTARF was waiting for an official decision regarding Thai participation.

¶4. (C) POLOFF also discussed the VDR with Donna Rodriguez who is responsible for ASEAN affairs at the Philippine Embassy in Bangkok. Rodriguez reported that the Philippine Embassy was focused on preparations for the ASEAN Summit. The Embassy would begin to engage the RTG on participation in the VDR after the Summit had passed.

¶5. (U) Embassy Bangkok POC for coordination regarding the VDR is Political Officer Thomas Hines.
JOHN